

my

Thetford Rural District Council.

ANNUAL REPORT

OF

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH, 1913.

Thetford, March 7th, 1914.

TO THE THETFORD RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

I beg to submit my Annual Report for the year 1913.

During the year 107 deaths were registered in the district, giving an annual death rate of 10.7 per 1,000, to which must be added 13 deaths of "residents" living in Public Institutions outside the district, making the nett death rate 11.9 per 1,000; this is the lowest death rate for several years.

2 deaths were due to Enteric Fever, 6 to Whooping Cough, 3 to Influenza, 7 to Phthisis, and 10 to Cancer.

There were 25 deaths of infants under a year old, giving an infant mortality of 110.1 per 1,000 births; this is unusually high, but 8 of them were babies under a week old. 10 of the deaths were of persons over 80 years of age, and 19 of persons between 70 and 80 years of age.

227 births were registered during the year, giving an annual birth rate of 22.5 per thousand; this is above the average.

28 cases of Infectious Diseases were notified during the year; these included 2 cases of Diphtheria, 6 of Scarlet Fever, 4 of Enteric Fever, and 16 of Tuberculosis.

The whole district covers an area 95,837 acres, with a population of 10,061. The district consists of small villages, hamlets, and scattered cottages, the inhabitants being mainly employed in agriculture. Part of the district is situated in the Fens, where the soil is peaty and marshy, but over the greater part the soil is very light and sandy, with a chalky sub-soil.

There is no public water supply in the district, and most of the houses are supplied by surface wells, which are liable to pollution; 5 samples of water were analysed, one of these was found to be polluted and the well was closed.

There is no system of Sewerage and Drainage in the district, and the privy system is nearly universal; a number of the vaults have been re-constructed and rendered water-tight. The night-soil is disposed of on the land and small gardens by the individual occupiers, who are responsible for its removal.

The Sanitary Inspector has made 1758 inspections during the year, and served 10 Statutory Notices, with the result that 9 nuisances were abated and 1 is still in hand; 574 nuisances were discovered and abated, 320 informal notices served, verbal instructions proving sufficient in the remainder of the cases. The majority of the nuisances referred to consisted of accumulations of refuse, privy vaults, and minor dilapidations.

A special report was made at the request of the Local Government Board, as to the disposal of refuse, &c., in the larger villages of the district, but up to the present no arrangements have been made for its systematic removal.

There are no "Common Lodging Houses" in the district.

There are no "Offensive Trades" carried on in the district.

The sanitary condition and water supply of the public Elementary Schools in the district is satisfactory. There was a rather severe epidemic of Whooping Cough in the district during the year.

In order to check the spread of infectious disease, the Headmaster or Headmistress of a school reports every case of absence due to infectious disease to the County School Medical Officer and to myself. I then send instructions to the Headteacher to exclude all members of the family until I have certified them free from infection.

There are a few dairies and cowsheds in the district; these are regularly inspected, and are fairly well kept; the milk supply is fairly good, and the quality of the milk is fair.

There are but few "Slaughter-houses" in the district; they are in good condition and well kept.

No carcases or parts of carcases have been condemned for Tuberculosis.

The house accommodation for the working classes is fairly good, as compared with other rural districts; the houses are for the most part clean and well kept, but the condition of some of those inhabited by the poorest people leaves much to be desired. 2 new cottages have been built during the year; the working-class population is almost stationary.

There are no Building Bye-Laws in the District.

Under the Housing and Towns Planning Act, 159 inspections have been made; no dwelling-houses were closed as unfit for human habitation. The majority of the houses inspected were deficient as regards light, ventilation, paving and dampness.

No. of Dwelling houses inspected.	No of houses unfit for habitation.	No. of representations made to obtain closing orders.	No. of closing orders made.	No. of dwelling houses in which defects were remedied without closing orders.	No. of dwelling houses made fit after closing orders.	General character of defects found to exist.
159	nil.	nil.	nil.	27	nil.	Insufficient light, ventilation, want of paving, and dampness.

Under the Factory and Workshops Act, 110 inspections were made, 16 nuisances were found and remedied.

There is no Isolation Hospital, except for Small-pox, in the district. The Small-pox Hospital serves the Thetford Urban and Rural, and Brandon Rural Districts

The method of dealing with infectious diseases in the district is as follows:—Upon receipt of notification the Medical Officer of Health and Sanitary Inspector visit and inspect the house, enquire as to the origin of the disease, give directions as to the isolation of the patient, and as far as possible of other inhabitants of the house, and in necessitous cases supply disinfectants. The Headmaster or Headmistress of the school in the district is notified to exclude all children from the house until further notice. The medical man in attendance notifies the Sanitary Inspector when the case is ready for disinfection. The Sanitary Inspector then thoroughly disinfects the premises by spraying and fumigating with "Formalin." The bedding is destroyed by burning where necessary, the owners being compensated by the Council.

The Council supply Diphtheria Antitoxin for the patient and for the inoculation of contacts in necessitous cases; they also pay for the examination of swabs in suspected cases of Diphtheria, and for the Widal blood reaction in cases of suspected Typhoid Fever.

On receipt of a notification of Tuberculosis, I visit in company with the Sanitary Inspector, and in necessitous cases supply Sputum Flasks, Disinfectants, and printed instructions, and the cases are subsequently visited frequently in order to see that the instructions are carried out. In cases of death or removal the house and contents are disinfected by spraying and fumigating with "Formalin."

There is no Hospital for the treatment of Pulmonary Tuberculosis in the district, but residents are admitted to Kelling Sanatorium, and in some cases open air shelters have been provided by private generosity.

I have received great assistance from your Sanitary Inspector during the year, and would again emphasize and commend the praiseworthy manner in which he carries out his many duties.

I am, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

GEOFFREY COWAN, M.D.,

Medical Officer of Health.

